



The former Wyndham Resort, Spa & Casino joins the Starwood Hotel & Resorts group under the flag of a Westin Hotel

The recent sale on May 3 of the Wyndham Aruba Resort, Spa & Casino to Belfonti Capital Partners has resulted in an agree that will make the property a member of the of one of the leading hotel and leisure companies on the globe, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide. On Thursday, May 25, Graeme Davis, Area Managing Director for South Florida and the Caribbean for Starwood met on the Sirocco Terrace of the now Aruba Resort Spa & Casino to declare how enthusiastic and confident Starwood is in the track record of the resort and its potential for growth.

Joined by Rob Smith, General Manager and Pat Donovan, Sales and Marketing Manager, Mr. Davis fielded questions from the press and revealed some of the plans Starwood has for the resort, including a twenty million dollar renovation of the guest rooms, meeting rooms and lobby area. When these renovations are completed, the resort will fly the Westin flag, hopefully within six months, but within one year at the latest, revealed Mr. Davis.

In addition to the investment in renovations, another one hundred million dollars will be invested in the construction of a vacation ownership resort on the land adjacent to the property, which will be a Starwood property. The hotel will continue to be owned by Belfonti group, under Starwood international management. This will provide untold benefits to the owners, in regards to Starwood's worldwide reputation for excellence, and access to an established cliental of six million families that choose Westin resorts for their vacation lodging. One of Mr. Davis' duties while on this visit was to put in place a team of twenty-five Starwood personnel that will train the hotel staff to their standards, and teach them an understanding of the "Starwood Experience." We are very excited to be working with such a professional and positive staff," expressed Mr. Davis, "The extensive renovation plans, Starwood's support and the dedication of the 450 employees already here will raise the bar on hospitality in Aruba."

This is the first Westin Resort in Aruba, a line of resorts that Mr. Davis categorizes as an "Upper-upscale brand." Other hotels under Starwood® Hotels, are the internationally famous St. Regis®, The Luxury Collection®, Sheraton®, Four Points® by Sheraton, W®, Le Meridien®, and the new Aloft. Sue Brand, senior vice president of Westin Hotels & Resorts stated "This property is a perfect fit for Westin's strategic Caribbean expansion. We are proud to bring Westin's signature personal renewal experience to this prime location on Aruba."

During the press conference, Mr. Davis could only express his satisfaction with the performance of General Manager Rob Smith and all of the staff over the past years. While Aruba may have seen a decrease in visitors the first quarter of 2006, the hotel's occupancy rates remained steady, and Mr. Davis expressed optimism that the renovations will only enhance the property's AAA Four Diamond rating. He affirmed that the entire staff will remain in place, and their connection to Starwood will now only offer additional opportunities for education in Hospitality Management with online courses from Cornell University, and advancement through one of their 850 owned and managed properties located in ninety-five countries around the world.

Alfonso Riverol, former owner of the Aruba Resort, Spa & Casino will continue as a consultant with the resort until the switch over to a Westin is completed. Mr. Davis complemented his attention to maintaining the quality of service, and establishing an impeccable reputation for the facility.

What will be a Westin Hotel within a year has a long history in Aruba as one of the top quality resorts, beginning as the Concorde more than twenty-five years ago. The present acquisition will only improve the property and offer it a marketing venue that will bring already established Westin customers to Aruba's shores. More information about Starwood Hotels & Resorts can be found by visiting their website www.starwoodhotels.com.